

decision to continue paying a claim despite knowledge of fraud is not dispositive if other reasons exist for the continued payment—these simple reasons like everybody expected our government ought to do: to continue protecting our troops, to continue helping our law enforcement officers be safe in their job, and to make sure that a veteran doesn't get taken as a sucker to give away a lot of money that would be illegally taken.

So, as shown by the examples I just gave you, examples I highlighted this very day, the government's decision to continue paying a claim by itself doesn't prove materiality.

You may ask: Why did the government continue the payments? Well, that is pretty much simple common sense too—because you want these programs to function the way they should function.

My amendment will guarantee that the government can hold fraudsters accountable even when the government has to continue payment for a product or a service.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kansas.

REMEMBERING JOHNNY ISAKSON

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today is an opportunity for me to remind our colleagues of the value of Senator Johnny Isakson. I particularly want to speak this afternoon about his work in regard to our Nation's veterans.

When Senator Isakson retired, resigned from the U.S. Senate, I replaced him as the chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, but I served the entire time he was the chairman. In fact, I have served the entire time I have been in the Senate and the entire time I have been in the House. And Senator Isakson and Congressman Isakson and I served together in both bodies.

I want to highlight for my colleagues and for Americans—and particularly the veterans across the country—that they had an advocate in Senator Johnny Isakson for them, for our Nation's veterans. He knew—he knew—the debt we owe to our veterans and kept that at the forefront of his mind and his heart as he led the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

His service as chairman was motivated by the stories of veterans who had touched his own life. Senator Isakson regularly spoke about two veterans—two veterans who shaped his approach as chairman: his college friend Jackson Elliott Cox III and Georgia native Noah Harris.

Jackson Cox volunteered to serve in the Marines in Vietnam and was killed

by a sniper a month before he was scheduled to return home. Noah Harris had volunteered to serve in the Army after 9/11 and was killed while serving in Iraq. Both men volunteered to serve their country in the military during times of war, and both men gave their lives in that service.

Senator Isakson was compelled by their service to remember and speak about the men and women who gave their lives to defend our Nation and believed that we must also remember and honor those who made it home.

Senator Isakson was involved in a number of legislative successes that improved how our Nation serves its veterans after they leave the military, and I want to highlight four of those pieces of legislation.

First, the Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act finally gave the VA the tools it needed to hold officials accountable following several scandals at the Department and set the expectation that the VA would maintain a high-performance workforce to serve our veterans.

Second, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 modernized the archaic benefits claims process at the VA and allowed VA to reduce its appeal backlog from nearly half a million appeals down to around 100,000. Veterans now have choices as to how they appeal benefits decisions and can receive timely decisions rather than waiting and waiting and waiting.

Third, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017, which is known as the Forever GI Bill, revolutionized veterans' education benefits by eliminating the 15-year window after service during which a veteran could use those benefits. It also invested in STEM education, IT and technology certification programs, and benefits for surviving families of veterans.

Finally, the VA MISSION Act is legislation I am proud to have championed alongside Senator Isakson. He knew that temporary programs put in place to address the Phoenix wait time scandal needed to be consolidated with existing options for care outside the VA, and I was honored to help him and the rest of Congress see the MISSION Act signed into law to give veterans clear choices on getting the care that best serves their needs.

Senator Isakson also felt a strong connection to veterans of the "greatest generation" who saved the world in World War II. On a visit in Europe, Senator Isakson came across the grave of Roy C. Irwin, who was killed in the Battle of the Bulge on the very same day that Senator Isakson was born in Georgia. He spoke regularly about the perspective that visit gave him and how he thought about what Roy Irwin and so many others who served had done for him and for all of us.

In his last year as chairman, Senator Isakson led a Senate delegation to commemorate the 75th anniversary of

D-day in Normandy, France. Despite the challenges his health may have posed for such a trip, he knew the importance of showing our World War II veterans and, in fact, the entire world that we remember their sacrifices and that as a nation, we honor the service of that generation and the example they set for generations to come.

Senator Isakson did not just remember the sacrifices of our veterans; he acted whenever he could to see to it that the benefits and services their country offered were delivered in the manner they deserved.

Before Army 1LT Noah Harris was killed in 2005, he and Senator Isakson exchanged letters, and Senator Isakson noted how Noah would always sign his letters "IDWIC," which stood for "I do what I can."

Similarly, Senator Isakson sought to get to yes on solutions instead of just focusing on problems or Senate differences or people's differences. He always worked to do everything he could when someone needed help, and his service to veterans will shine as an example for others—for us—to emulate. We will remember Senator Isakson and the impact he had on our Nation's veterans, and that will be remembered for generations.

Senator Isakson served 6 years in the House and 14 years in the Senate. He died December 19 at age 76. Over two decades of service and certainly over two decades of service to America's veterans.

I want to extend my condolences to Senator Isakson's wife Dianne and his children, Julie, Kevin, and John.

Please know that we are thinking of you all and are praying for you during this challenging and difficult time.

May God bless that family, and may Johnny Isakson rest in peace.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING HARRY REID

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, a week ago, the Senate lost a distinguished former colleague and the State of Nevada lost an unparalleled advocate.

Senator Harry Reid's path to this Chamber was a quintessentially American story. His incredible path from childhood poverty, to the boxing ring, to leading the U.S. Senate took both toughness and tenacity. And in this Chamber, just like everywhere else, Harry left it all in the ring.

As leaders of our respective parties, the two of us disagreed energetically and often. We had sharply different views, goals, and philosophies on everything from public policy to the institution of the Senate itself. But through